

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings of claims.

1. (Previously presented) A method for providing access to a public switched telephone network by offsetting the service cost through charging a set activation fee, comprising:

receiving billing information from a set activation fee pay telephone, the set activation fee pay telephone associated with an originating telephone number;

determining whether the billing information is valid;

if the billing information is valid, then

providing a dial tone to the set activation fee telephone from the public switched telephone network if the billing information is valid;

causing a telephone call to be connected to a telephone number received from the set activation fee pay telephone;

identifying the telephone call as having the originating telephone number associated with the set activation fee telephone; and

based on the identification, charging the set activation fee for the telephone call.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein identifying the telephone call as having the originating telephone number, comprises:

querying a database for the presence of the originating telephone number associated with the set activation fee pay telephone, the database comprising a plurality of originating telephone numbers associated with a plurality of set activation fee pay telephones; and

if the query is positive, then determining that the telephone call originated from the set activation fee pay telephone.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the database is associated with a Service Control Point (SCP).

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein determining whether the billing information is valid comprises:

querying a database for the presence of the billing information, the database comprising a plurality of numbers associated with a plurality of entries associated with a plurality of valid billing accounts.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the database is associated with a Service Control Point.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the set activation fee is the same for every telephone call placed from the set activation fee telephone.

8. - 22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously presented) A method for calculating a charge for a telephone call directed to a called telephone number, comprising:

monitoring a telephone call placed to the called telephone number to determine call parameters for the telephone call;

determining whether the telephone call originated from a telephone having an originating telephone number that corresponds to an entry in a database;

if so, then determining that a set activation fee applies to the telephone call; and

calculating the charge for the telephone call by using the call parameters to calculate a first portion of the charge; and

adding the set activation fee as a second portion of the charge by a network element, so that the set activation fee is independent of the first portion of the charge

prior to placing the telephone call to the called telephone number, determining whether billing information for the telephone call is valid.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 23, wherein the call parameters include call length, call origination time, and the called telephone number.

25. (Canceled)

26. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein:

determining whether the billing information is valid includes determining if an account is active, without determining the funds available.

27. (New) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

adding the set activation fee and the charge for the telephone call to a customer bill.